1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

342 823 [171] BUILDING CUSTOMS. Like their village neighbours about them, Kols have numerous superstitions relating to houses and certain customs in connection with their construction. In India, it has been said, "a house should face north or east and not south or west, as the south is the region of Yama, the God of Death, who lives in Ceylon, and the west is the quarter of the setting sun."[1] Kols are not quite [177] so particular in this respect although due to Hindu influences there is a general tendency to follow this plan. The Kols observe a general rule which is that if the house is to be longer than it is wide, the greatest length should be parallel to the north-south line.

When a new house is about to be built in a village, its actual position is generally determined in relation to the other houses about it. If the position of the house is not limited by other houses, and if there is doubt as to the location, a Hindu *pandit* is sometimes [177 791] called to help decide the exact place. The *pandit* consults astrological factors as from these he is said to be able to determine whether the place is suitable or not, or if an evil spirit lives on that spot or nearby. If the report should be unfavourable, another spot is selected and the process repeated. When satisfactory, the *pandit* will also fix the day on which work should begin on the construction of the building. For this service he is paid two annas to a rupee according to the ability of the builder to pay.

342 If the house is not to be permanent little or no ceremony is observed in connection with its building, as it is considered a temporary structure which can be broken up in a few minutes.

If, however, the house is one with mud walls and is of a more permanent nature, there are certain customs which are quite generally observed. The foundation trench is first dug although this may be hardly more than a levelling of the ground on which the walls will [782] stand. A "foundation stone" is usually placed somewhere in the trench, and beneath it are put two pice, some rice coloured yellow with turmeric and an areca nut (*Areca catechu*). The walls are constructed of mud with a certain amount of cow dung and straw mixed in to insure its stability.

One of the pictures[2] shows a Kol house in the process of construction. This particular house was being built on the site of another house. In this case, which was observed for some time, the following customs were noted, and found also to apply to other [789] cases of building.

Just within the threshold of the single entrance to the house there

1 Russell and Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces*, Vol. III, p. 88.
2 See Plate VIII.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

775 776 789 MEETING A SPIRIT. Even though properly protected from spiritual forces one is still not immune from their attacks. If one should meet a spirit it is always proper to be very respectful in its presence and to try not to offend it in any way. If the *bhut* is addressed as one would address a gentleman he may behave like one. If one moves further on and the *bhut* insists on following, the person attended may, provided he is properly protected by charms, call out the name of Khermai three or four times in rapid succession. Her very name is so powerful that the evil spirit is helpless and goes away disgusted. But should the person not be properly protected by amulets and the like, he should not call upon Khermai.

If it should be necessary to pass the known dwelling place of a *bhut* or other spirit, the person should first stop and respectfully ask the spirit to let him pass safely. No person should be boastful in the presence of a spirit nor use the name of Khermai except as a last resort. The spirit should be addressed as "Maharaj" if a male, and [576] if a female as "Mata". These respectful forms of address are pleasing to them and they will allow such people to pass without harm.

789 HOW SPIRITS MAY BE CAST OUT. Evil spirits may be cast out only by those who know the secret processes and *mantras* necessary, [791] and such secrets are usually carefully guarded by the initiated. The *panda* is probably familiar with methods although not all of them [648] would admit that they were, and a member of the Baiga tribe is *par excellence* the man. The *bawa* is usually associated with this ceremony.

The *supa* method, forms of which are described below, is the usual method of driving out an evil spirit. Again, the priest while possessed of the *devi* may order the family to perform certain rites, such as feeding the group, sacrificing at the shrine, abstaining from rich foods, and the like; or he may even beat the unfortunate being with his iron lash until the blood flows. This will surely frighten the demon away.

There is another form known to the Kols by the name of *jharna*, 'the sifting or winnowing'. A *supa* (winnowing fan), a *hansiya* (sickle) [824] and a bit of *Kans* grass (*Saccharium spontaneum*) are made use of in [785] this particular wave ceremony. The person on whom these will be used must have fasted for a period and have had *mantras* pronounced over him, then the above articles are one by one waved over him. The sickle, the grass and the winnowing fan are all symbolical of removing a spirit: the sickle, as it is first waved, symbolizes the cutting down of the spirit, the grass implies the work is done, and in the sifting